

A Romance of Extraordinary Distinction

THE MARSHAL

By Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews

Author of *The Perfect Tribute, etc.*

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(Continued from Monday.)

CHAPTER XXIII.
Rest and Safety.

He heard the sound of waves outside, the slipping of ropes, the clapping of sails. He kept his eyes closed a few minutes, not daring to open them. There was a blessed atmosphere of rest and safety about him; he feared to find it unreal if he opened his eyes. He feared to find himself in the state of a daze. He listened attentively—surely sails and cordage and slapping waves—and then he was aware of the motion of a boat. Cautiously he peered from under half-closed lids. A small room, a boat's cabin, nothing to tell him he was in the hands of friends or of enemies. Yet—was it a dream that he had seen the general and Pietro, had ridden long miles in the dawn with Alise? Such dreams come to comfort poor prisoners—he knew that. But at that point his eyes flashed wide and his arms flew out. Something more had crept into that circumscribed field of his vision—a quiet figure sitting in a dark corner of the little room.

"Alise!"

Not a dream, not another world; just the close sweetness of her face bent over him, her hand holding his, of her courageous soft voice speaking to him caressingly as if he were a child, as if he were dear to her.

"You must not talk, Francois. After a while—not yet. You are very weak."

So he smiled and lay happily, clutching her hand with his long, hot, shaking fingers, like a bird's claws for thinness. But a hunted beast may not rest absolutely till it knows if the bloodhounds are distant. The cavernous eyes turned on Alise with a question, and she understood.

"You want to know if you are safe, dear Francois?" and she stroked his hand. "Yes. You are on the boat of little Battista—Luigi's boat it is now. Little Battista gave it to Luigi when he went to France, and Luigi is his friend and also one of Pietro's people. You will hear about that later. We are going now to the harbor of Commachio, 60 miles from Castelforte. You are to be put on board a big ship there, and taken away to safety. Yet you are safe now—rest in that, for it is true."

And Francois drew a deep trembling breath and, holding Alise's hand, fell asleep.

When he awoke next his eyes opened swiftly and turned to the corner where Alise had sat. It was not Alise there this time, but the general. And the general came and sat down by him and patted his hand and swore softly at him saying, "sacre de bois," and "nom d'un chien," and such things, and called him his own boy, and told him his mother and father were well and confident of his rescue; yes, and told him also how it was Alise who had waited every night for him in Riders' Hollow, and would let no one take her place.

"It was the best arrangement," said the general. "For Pietro is too well known—it would have been unsafe for you both. And I am so much the old officer that I should have been remarked instantly; also I am heavy in the saddle. But Alise passed easily for some peasant lad with a led horse for his master; also she rides light and so could save the horses, which was important, for only two horses could we have and they were to be in service one knew not how long."

Francois asked a feeble question. "Ah—Pietro. He is a fine sort, our Pietro. They adore him, here in the country. There is a farmer back there who owed his life and home to the Zappis, to Pietro's father and mother. The horses were his. They were brought after dark and returned before sunrise, but it was far, and hard on the beasts. And a risk for the good Giuseppe; but he was glad to serve Pietro; they adore Pietro."

Quite malapropos, the general leaned over at this point and stretched out a heavy hand and patted Francois' pale cheek and smiled and said, as he had said so many years ago on that morning when the news came of the marquis' death, "is a good thing to have a son, my Francois." And Francois, being fed shortly after, fell asleep again like a tired baby.

And the next time he awoke it was with a new feeling; with a desire and a hope to live. Pietro sat watching him and brought him warm milk and held his head up as he drank it, like a woman. Then, in quiet slow tones, he explained to him the puzzle which Francois had by now begun to wonder over. It seemed that just before little Battista had brought Francois' letter to Viques, Pietro had received another unexpected letter, from a Colonel Hampton in Virginia, whose estate lay next to the six thousand acres of land which the Marquis Zappi had bought fifteen years before. Colonel Hampton wrote with two requests. The first was that the Marquis Zappi should come to Virginia, or send one with authority to look after his property. The land was going to rack and ruin for want of management; the uncontrolled slaves on the place were demoralizing to the neighborhood. Colonel Hampton had done what he could, but he had not the power of a master, and moreover he was busy with his own large estate. The marquis should come, or send a qualified agent and at once.

The next object of the letter was to ask that the marquis should receive and entertain the nephew of Colonel Hampton, Mr. Henry Hampton, who, sailing on Colonel Hampton's ship, the *Lovely Lucy*, would bring this letter to the marquis. The ship would go first to England and discharge there her cargo of tobacco, and after that it was to be at the service of young Mr. Hampton, to visit such countries of Europe as he might choose, for six months. Mr. Hampton had many letters to people in England, but none elsewhere, and Colonel Hampton would be obliged if the marquis would receive him at his estate of Castelforte and let him see something of Italy from that point of vantage. The marquis might then, if he thought good, return to Virginia in the *Lovely Lucy*, and either set matters on a firm enough footing to be left, or else—which the colonel considered the better plan—stay with them and become a country gentleman from Virginia. The colonel had heard that there had been political trouble in Italy, but hoped that at this time the country was at peace

and the marquis comfortably established in his own castle.

All this the young marquis, an exile of five years from his native land, had read at the chateau of Viques. He had considered deeply as to what he might do about Carnifax, his estate in Virginia. He could not go himself, for he was in close connection with the work of Italian patriots outside and inside of Italy; with Mazzini in London; with others in other places. And he did not know any one whom he could send.

So the matter stood when the little Battista had brought Francois' letter to Viques. And when Alise had appealed to him to take Francois' liberty, something like banking one's head against a stone wall. Mr. Henry Hampton had planned going direct to Paris, but he went to Viques. And on the journey down the Marquis Zappi opened out a plan which richly rewarded him for his pliability. Mr. Hampton had somewhat clearer ideas on Italian politics than his uncle; he knew enough to detest the Austrians and to have a keen sympathy for the young hero, losing fight—so far losing—of those devoted men who were counting their lives as nothing for a united Italy. The scheme of helping to rescue a prisoner out of an Austrian fortress was an adventure such as made his eyes dance. Mr. Hampton was 21 and full of romance, romance as yet ungratified. So, Pietro told Francois, this long explanation over, the *Lovely Lucy* was anchored at an unimportant island outside the port for which they were bound, and Francois and the others were to go on board and set sail promptly for some port of France. There the general, Alise, Pietro and little Battista were to be put ashore, and Francois was to sail across to Virginia with Mr. Hampton and take possession for Pietro of his American estates.

(To be continued.)

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